

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 SCCT-01

SAM-01 /087 W

----- 018357

O R 020918Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9849

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3888

STUTTGART FOR ELG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION MAY 2: RISING INSECURITY THREATENS
POLITICAL PROCESS

REF: BEIRUT 3884 (DTG 011105Z MAY 76)

1. RESIDENTS IN SEVERAL PARTS OF BEIRUT LOST CONSIDERABLE SLEEP LAST NIGHT AS LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY DUELS MIXED WITH SMALL-ARMS FIRING PUNCTUATED HOURS UP TO MIDNIGHT AND AGAIN BEFORE DAWN THIS MORNING. AFTER SUBSIDING BRIEFLY AFTER DAYLIGHT TODAY, EXCHANGES OF FIRING FROM WEAPONS OF VARYING CALIBER ARE AGAIN AUDIBLE AS OF MID-MORNING. MOST OF FIGHTING IS IN PORT AREA. ACCORDING TO TWO SEPARATE SOURCES, LEFTISTS/REJECTIONISTS LAUNCHED AN OFFENSIVE LAST EVENING AGAINST KATAEB POSITIONS IN PORT. SOURCES ALSO REPORT THAT UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS YESTERDAY SHOT AT CAR OF ONE OF SYRIAN COLONELS ON JOINT MILITARY COMMITTEE, AND THIS MAY HAVE SPARKED SYRIAN-INSPIRED RETALIATION AGAINST LEFTISTS. (THE COLONEL WAS NOT IN CAR AT THE TIME AND IS UNHURT.) UPSHOT IS THAT CEASEFIRE BEING INCREASINGLY IGNORED THROUGHOUT THE CAPITAL. THE JOINT TRUCE COMMITTEE MET YESTERDAY UNDER KARAME AND IS TRYING TO GET ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENTS AND CLASHES TO STOP. SIGN OF ITS FRUSTRATION, HOWEVER, IS FACT THAT IT DOES NOT PLAN TO MEET AGAIN UNTIL DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

2. THE ESCALATED FIGHTING IS CAUSING MANY TO WONDER IF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL BE HELD MAY 8. VIOLENCE IS CURRENTLY AT LEVEL THAT WOULD MAKE SECURITY ALONG "GREEN LINE" NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE IF SESSION WERE HELD TODAY, AND EFFORTS TO END FIGHTING SO FAR APPEAR INEFFECTUAL AGAINST POLARIZATION OCCURRING. SINCE SESSION IS STILL NEARLY A WEEK AWAY, THIS IS NOT YET SEEN AS INSUPERABLE PROBLEM, BUT CONCERN ABOUT FEASIBILITY OF MAY 8 DATE IS BEING EXPRESSED BY MORE THAN ONE OF OUR CONTACTS.

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3. ON ASSUMPTION THAT SESSION WILL MEET AS SCHEDULED, THE SEARCH FOR A COMPROMISE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE GOES ON. INITIATIVE IS STILL IN HANDS OF SPEAKER ASAAD. HE REPORTEDLY INTENDS TO APPROACH JUMBLATT ON ONE SIDE AND THE KATAEB ON THE OTHER TO SEE IF AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED ON A NAME.

4. ADDING TO GENERAL TENSION IS STILL-UNSOLVED CASE

OF EDDY CHAMOUN, EX-PRESIDENT CHAMOUN'S NEWPHEW,
WHO WAS KIDNAPPED BY UNKNOWN ELEMENTS DAY BEFORE
YESTERDAY (REFTEL). HE HAS NOT BEEN FOUND. FEAR IS
WIDESPREAD THAT HE IS DEAD. IF THIS TURNS OUT TO BE
TRUE, CHRISTIAN RETALIATION OF SOME KIND WOULD LOOM
AS MAJOR POSSIBILITY.
BROWN

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NNN

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